

Erica Iyamu-Osagie
UConn School of Social Work
New Britain, Connecticut
erica.iyamu-osagie@uconn.edu

Good afternoon members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address your Committee today. My name is Erica Iyamu-Osagie and I am a student at the University of Connecticut, School of Social Work. I wish to indicate my strong support for SB no.152, an act prohibiting open alcoholic beverage containers in motor vehicles.

Throughout my life, I have had many experiences with drunk driving. As a teenager, I lost several friends who were drunk drivers or victims of drunk driving. Allowing open containers of alcoholic beverages in motor vehicles encourages drivers to consume these beverages. Without this ban, Connecticut makes it lawful for drivers to drink while driving. This issue is very personal to me because as an adolescent, I was a victim of drunk driving. For that reason, I am not only in support for this act but I have also advocated for this issue. Drunk driving takes the lives of many people in Connecticut and nationwide.

- In Connecticut, 37% of deaths in car crashes were caused by drunk driving in 2007
- Nationwide, alcohol-related driving fatalities accounted for 32% of total traffic deaths
- Underage drinkers accounted for 14% of drunk driving deaths in 2007

I believe that it is not vital to have any open containers of alcohol within the passenger area of a motor vehicle. If someone plans to carry alcoholic beverages inside of their vehicle, there is no valid reason why it needs to be in the passenger area, unless they are planning to consume these beverages. These beverages can be stored safely in the trunk of the vehicle, or if unopened, inside the vehicle itself. Along with myself, I have talked to many people who have lost members of their families or close friends to drunk driving. The devastation that is endured by the losing someone to drunk driving can be lessened by banning open alcoholic beverages in a motor vehicle. If SB no. 152 is passed, I predict that there will be a decrease in drunken driving accidents in this state.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any question that you may have.